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Friday, 25 March 2011, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Li Baodong	(China)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. Dunn

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Atul Khare, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Khare.

Mr. Khare: We last provided an update to the Security Council on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire on 3 March. Since then, the security situation has further deteriorated with security forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo using heavy weapons against civilians in Abidjan, particularly in the Abobo, Adjamé, Attécoubé, Koumassi, Treichville and Williamsville neighbourhoods, which are known as strongholds of President Ouattara and which are shown on the map distributed to the members of the Council.

Allow me to mention a few of the most egregious incidents of the use of excessive force against civilians. On 3 March, in Abobo, security forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo used heavy machine guns against a group of women demonstrating peacefully in support of President Ouattara, killing seven women and seriously wounding many others.

On 7 March, the Ebrié ethnic community in Anonkoua-Kouté, located outside Abidjan, which is believed to support Mr. Gbagbo, was attacked by armed individuals, allegedly partisans of the so-called invisible commandos supporting President Ouattara. The attack resulted in the displacement of most of the community's some 5,000 inhabitants. On 8 March, at least four people were killed in Treichville when security forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo and armed individuals supporting President Ouattara clashed following a demonstration by women commemorating those who had been killed on 3 March.

On 11 March, in Abobo, eight civilians, including three children, were killed when elements of the forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo used heavy weapons, including rocket-propelled grenades and mortars. On 15 March, unidentified persons threw a grenade into a heavily populated area of Attécoubé, killing one person and wounding at least 18. On 17 March, more than 25 people were killed and more than 40 wounded when security forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo fired several mortar shells at a market building in Abobo. On 19 March, the village of Akeikoi, near Abidjan, which is predominantly inhabited by the Attié ethnic community believed to support Mr. Gbagbo, was raided by armed men who were allegedly partisans of the so-called invisible commandos.

Yesterday, on 24 March, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) received information that civilians had been shelled from Camp Commando in Abobo-Samanké. A UNOCI patrol attended the scene. Upon reaching the location, the patrol observed security forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo firing mortars. UNOCI opened fire at the mortar position and the security forces consequently fled their position.

Numerous smaller-scale incidents also continue to take place in these areas. Many of the wounded civilians are being brought to the headquarters of UNOCI, which has been providing medical treatment. To date, UNOCI — the mission authorized by the Security Council — has treated 254 wounded persons, of whom 131 had gunshot wounds, 77 were wounded by grenades and 46 by machete or had burn injuries. The capacity of the mission's level-I plus hospital is seriously overstretched and immediate support in terms of a surgical team would help the mission to address that challenge.

Many clashes between the Young Patriots and supporters of President Ouattara have also occurred in the Yopougon neighbourhood of Abidjan. There have also been attacks by both the Young Patriots and the armed forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo targeting nationals from West African countries. Business premises owned by nationals of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) countries have been vandalized and looted in Abidjan. Forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo also vandalized and looted residences of several Ministers of President Ouattara's Government in Abidjan between 3 and 5 March. In retaliation, youth groups loyal to President Ouattara looted two houses

belonging to senior officials of Mr. Gbagbo's party in Bouaké and Abidjan.

Meanwhile, fighting between elements of the defence and security forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo and the Forces nouvelles, in violation of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement signed on 3 May 2003, remains a major issue of concern. Both sides are reportedly using heavy weapons, while continuing to recruit, train and arm their forces. On 6 March, the Forces nouvelles took control of Toulepleu, a key town on the border with Liberia, after heavy fighting with forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo, capturing a multibarrel rocket launcher — known in military parlance as a BM-21 — abandoned by the Forces de défense et de sécurité (FDS). From there, the Forces nouvelles advanced towards Guiglo. Fighting was reported in Daloa and Bonoufla, with the Forces nouvelles reportedly taking control of the villages of Doke and Zaibo, as well as Bloléquin, after heavy fighting on 20 March.

While President Ouattara signed a decree on 17 March unifying the Ivorian defence and security forces and the Forces nouvelles under a single command, called the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire, on 19 March the leader of the Young Patriots, Mr. Charles Blé Goudé, called on the Young Patriots to report to FDS headquarters on 21 March to enrol in the army in order to "liberate" the country.

The deteriorating security situation and the escalation in the use of heavy weapons have taken a serious toll on the lives and well-being of the Ivorian people. The human rights situation is very grave, with a high number of human rights violations reported. UNOCI reported 462 killings between mid-December and 23 March, of which 72 victims were ECOWAS nationals; at least 520 cases of arbitrary arrest and detention, some involving torture; and at least 72 cases of disappearances.

I am also very concerned about the dire humanitarian situation and its potential to exacerbate the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and in the subregion, particularly in Liberia. To date, over 93,000 people have sought refuge in Liberia, while up to 1 million have been internally displaced, of whom some 300,000 are in Abidjan, while many are leaving the city. In that regard, I would stress that the emergency humanitarian flash appeal for Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia remains seriously underfunded, hampering the ability of the United Nations to provide much-needed services to those forced to flee their homes. Access to those affected by the ongoing crisis remains a serious concern. It is essential that all sides allow unhindered access for humanitarian actors to reach those in need.

Meanwhile, the Young Patriots and security forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo continued to obstruct UNOCI operations, including by blocking access by UNOCI patrols to areas where clashes between forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo and supporters of President Ouattara were ongoing. In addition, a number of attacks against United Nations personnel were reported. For example, on 12 March, Young Patriots attacked a UNOCI staff member in the parking lot of a supermarket. He was wounded and robbed, while the United Nations vehicle was set on fire. On 15 March, one peacekeeper was reported missing, allegedly abducted by Young Patriots; he is still unaccounted for. On 16 March, a UNOCI supply convoy was fired upon by forces loyal to Mr. Gbagbo in the area of Abobo in Abidjan. On 23 March, in Guiglo, armed elements forced their way into the premises of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees several times, removing equipment and a number of vehicles. A crowd of Young Patriots prevented a response by UNOCI forces.

On the political front, as Council members are already aware, the High-Level Panel met in Addis Ababa on 9 March to develop its recommendations to the African Union Peace and Security Council. Special Representative of the Secretary-General Djinnit was present. On 10 March, the African Union Peace and Security Council met at the level of Heads of State to receive the recommendations of the Panel, in the presence of President Ouattara and representatives of Mr. Gbagbo, and endorsed the Panel's recommendations. The African Union Peace and Security Council requested the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to appoint a high representative to facilitate the implementation of the Panel's recommendations.

In an address to the nation on 15 March, President Ouattara stated that he had accepted the decisions of the African Union Peace and Security Council and outlined his vision, with an emphasis on national reconciliation, including the formation of a Government of national unity and a truth and reconciliation commission, as well as the implementation of the unfinished tasks in the Ouagadougou Political Agreement.

However, Mr. Gbagbo's "cabinet" met and issued a communiqué on 17 March stating that the African Union had made its decision without a proper evaluation of the elections, and adding that an inter-Ivorian dialogue would be the only way to resolve the crisis. The communiqué further demanded that "the rebels" disarm. As mentioned earlier, that cabinet statement was immediately followed by a call from the leader of the Young Patriots to mobilize the youth to "liberate" Côte d'Ivoire.

Let me now turn to the actions that UNOCI has been undertaking to protect civilians, including investigating and documenting abuses and violations of human rights under very challenging circumstances. For example, on 12 March, in Attécoubé in Abidjan, the FDS blocked a patrol responding to calls by shop owners and civilians that were being attacked by Young Patriots. UNOCI reinforced the patrol, which forced its way through the barricades and reached the area, where it helped to put out fires in shops that had been set alight and evacuated the wounded. UNOCI has also increased the number of patrols to vulnerable communities or neighbourhoods under attack. UNOCI has made arrangements for a permanent patrol to be stationed on a 24/7 basis in the high-risk neighbourhood of Abobo. We believe that these measures have prevented additional killings in Abobo, Attécoubé and Koumassi from taking place.

Aerial reconnaissance is being conducted in Abidjan and in the rest of the country, using the armed helicopters temporarily redeployed from the United Nations Mission in Liberia to UNOCI to deter violence. Meanwhile, the new Force Commander, General Béréna, assumed his responsibilities on 20 March, and we would like to convey again our appreciation to the former Force Commander, General Hafiz, for his service.

UNOCI has now been able to access some of the sites of alleged mass graves that the Mission had previously been prevented from visiting. Efforts are under way to investigate reported sites of mass graves. The Mission received information about alleged killings of 200 ECOWAS nationals in villages in the Duekoue area and is preparing to send a team to investigate these allegations. The Mission continues to record all reported human rights violations. At the same time, UNOCI is making every effort to keep channels of communication open with both sides.

Before concluding, I would like to express our appreciation to the leaders of ECOWAS, who met over the past two days in Abuja and took very important decisions on Côte d'Ivoire. Special Representative Djinnit was invited to the summit. As members of the Council are aware, in their resolution they strongly condemned the ongoing violence against civilians and deplored the deliberate targeting of ECOWAS citizens and other foreign nationals and attacks on United Nations personnel. They made it clear that the deteriorating security situation and the escalating violence are a "direct consequence of the refusal of out-going President, Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, to cede power to Mr. Alassane Ouattara, the universally recognized winner of the 28 November 2010 election". The resolution states that the time has come to enforce the decisions to ensure the transfer of power to President Ouattara with out any further delay. To this end, ECOWAS requested the Security Council to authorize the immediate implementation of previous ECOWAS decisions.

The summit also directed the President of the ECOWAS Commission to explore all avenues to provide President Ouattara's Government with the necessary legal and diplomatic means to exercise its authority. It further requested the Security Council to consider the situation in Côte d'Ivoire with a view to strengthening UNOCI's mandate, and to adopt more stringent international sanctions against Mr. Gbagbo and his associates. Finally, it urged the international community to ensure an enabling environment for the population and UNOCI to implement its mandate, including the protection of civilians, and invited the African Union Commission to urgently implement the 10 March decisions of the African Union Peace and Security Council.

I should like to conclude here by again noting that the Mission is making every effort, in the challenging circumstances it faces, to enhance its work and to ensure that the mandates provided by the Security Council are implemented on the ground.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Khare for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bamba (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that I am taking the floor in the Security Council since having been appointed and

begun my work as Permanent Representative by the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, on this solemn occasion I should like to convey the profound and sincere gratitude of the people, the Government and the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire to the members of the Security Council for having paid tireless attention to the Ivorian crisis.

The obligation and responsibility to protect civilians in situations of imminent danger is at the heart of the concerns of the international public opinion, given the situation that has prevailed in Côte d'Ivoire since 28 November 2010 and despite the presence of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), which is mandated, inter alia, to protect civilians in imminent danger of violence. Over the past three months, Mr. Gbagbo's forces have committed massive violations of human rights and massacred more than 500 civilians with their hands tied. In the light of this duty and responsibility to protect civilians, my delegation calls on the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, to authorize the strengthening of the mandate and current posture of UNOCI.

The thirty-ninth Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 23 and 24 March, adopted resolution A/RES.1/03/11 of 24 March. The resolution, inter alia,

> "requests the United Nations Security Council to authorize the immediate implementation of the Authority Decisions of December 2010. In this context, [it] requests the United Nations Security Council to strengthen the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire... enabling the Mission to use all necessary means to protect life and property, and to facilitate the immediate transfer of power to Mr. Alassane Ouattara".

The resolution also recalled

> "the decisions of the Extraordinary Summits of the Authority of 7 and 24 December 2010, particularly regarding paragraph 10 of the latter, which states: 'In the event that Mr. Gbagbo fails to heed the immutable demand of ECOWAS to hand over power, the Community would be left with no alternative but to take other measures, including the use of legitimate force, to achieve the goals of the Ivorian people'".

Therefore, taking into account the deep involvement of ECOWAS in addressing the Ivorian crisis, the application of Chapter VIII in this regard seems relevant to us, with a view to ensuring the necessary coordination and cooperation between UNOCI and ECOWAS in order to effectively protect Côte d'Ivoire's civilian population, millions of whom were born in other ECOWAS countries.

In its decision taken at the 265th meeting, held in Addis Ababa on 10 March, the African Union Peace and Security Council definitively confirmed the legitimacy of Mr. Alassane Ouattara as President of Côte d'Ivoire. It also called on Mr. Gbagbo, for the last time, to peacefully cede power in no more than two weeks. A high representative of the African Union is to be appointed to implement that decision. With the deadline having passed yesterday, a high representative is yet to be named.

Assistant Secretary-General Khare referred to the escalation of violence currently taking place in Côte d'Ivoire, which is a matter of genuine concern. Ivorians are dying every day. Human rights violations are taking place daily. Every Ivorian is experiencing the traumatic effects of this situation. I would just refer to two incidents. On the morning of 3 March, women who had gone out to demonstrate — in a joyous, carnival-like atmosphere — were machine-gunned by Mr. Gbagbo's forces. Like members of the Council, many people were shocked by the images broadcast around the world. Four days later, artillery shells were fired at a market in the neighbourhood of Abobo. The mortars that fell in the centre of the market, during the busiest period, killed 40 and injured 60.

My delegation is concerned, and has asked to speak here to draw the Council's attention to this unbridled escalation of violence in Côte d'Ivoire. Moreover, we wish to reiterate our condemnation, voiced some time ago, in connection with what is a situation of ethnic cleansing or premeditated genocide. Those being targeted include, first, Ivorians of Dioula and Baoulé ethnicities, whose members include, respectively, President Alassane Ouattara and President Henri Konan Bédié, his ally in the coalition with the Rally of Houphouëtistes for Democracy and Peace; secondly, nationals from other ECOWAS States living in Côte d'Ivoire, including from Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Ghana, Togo and Benin; and, thirdly, Africans of the Muslim faith.

Civilians living in Côte d'Ivoire are victims of Mr. Gbagbo's reign of terror, whose atrocities include a propensity by his militias to desecrate mosques and assassinate Muslim clergy, in the hope of provoking a similar reaction by the Muslim community, thereby sparking an inter-ethnic conflict of incalculable consequences. Fortunately, in their great wisdom, leaders of the Muslim community have echoed the calls for calm and restraint, which have been heeded by their followers.

The toll of the atrocities since the beginning of the post-electoral crisis up to 18 March is as follows: 859 killed by gunfire; 1,886 injured, 542 of them seriously; 100 persons disappeared; and 876 arrests, with 45 persons still being held.

As expected, this situation has set off an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe in Côte d'Ivoire, with negative consequences for the region. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations has already cited statistics, so I shall not repeat them.

Faced with a situation that is further deteriorating on a daily basis, the tragedy being experienced by our people and the danger of increased crimes against humanity, my delegation solemnly calls on the Security Council to immediately adopt robust measures against former President Gbagbo and all those who support him. Those measures should include, first, the immediate establishment by UNOCI and the Licorne force of a comprehensive plan throughout the country to provide security for civilians in imminent threat of danger, especially in Abobo and Anyama, by putting in place a security cordon; second, the destruction of military weapons used by Mr. Gbagbo's forces to carry out the massacre of civilians; third, completely isolating Mr. Gbagbo by not recognizing his representatives, in particular in Africa; fourth, a prohibition on the issuance of visas to Mr. Gbagbo and members of his family and inner circle; fifth, the strengthening of monitoring of the embargo on weapons and the application of sanctions against countries that contribute to its violation; sixth, freezing the assets held abroad by Mr. Gbagbo, his family and his inner circle; seventh, submitting the serious violations of human rights and crimes against humanity in Côte d'Ivoire to the International Criminal Court; and, lastly, emergency authorization of the legitimate use of force to safeguard Côte d'Ivoire's population, democracy and peace, as well as to install President Alassane Ouattara fully into office.

We have recently learned that Mr. Gbagbo's militias have acquired weapons of mass destruction, including BM-21 multiple rocket launchers and a Mi-24 helicopter, which they are preparing to use against civilians. In addition, we have been informed that heavy weapons are pointed at the Golf Hotel, where the President of Côte d'Ivoire is temporarily lodged. Those weapons pose an ongoing real threat against the personal security of the country's President, his Government and all those inside the Golf Hotel.

The question that arises is, Can the Security Council content itself with remaining a passive observer in the face of the calculated extermination of many thousands of people living in Côte d'Ivoire?

In his latest message to the nation, President Ouattara expressed his desire to bring together, without distinction, all the people of Côte d'Ivoire, carrying out a concrete programme for national reconciliation and the unification of the army and the country as a whole. President Ouattara believes that we must close the chapter on violence and civil war. Côte d'Ivoire should once again become the country of peace and hospitality it has always been, and once again follow its calling, in the words of its national anthem, as a united and welcoming country.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.